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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, AUGUST 3, 2006

A QUICK LOOK AT THE TURKISH PRESS
August 3, 2006

In Today's Papers

Conflict in the Middle East

All papers claim in the face of the advancing Israeli offensive in south Lebanon that Israel's goal is to destroy Lebanon rather than disarming Hezbollah. Papers report Israeli PM Ehud Olmert told the international press in Jerusalem that he wanted Turkish forces to be included in an international force because "Israel trusts the Turkish military and government." "Peacekeeping force blackmail," reads a Cumhuriyet front page headline, referring to Olmert's statement that there will be no ceasefire until an international peace force deployed disarms the Hezbollah in Lebanon. The Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak lashes out at Arab leaders for remaining silent in the face of the Israeli atrocities in Lebanon and for sending lower level officials to the meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Malaysia, from which the "Muslim world expects a strong reaction" to the Israeli conduct in Palestine and Lebanon. Papers report that, so far, 70 lawmakers have resigned from the Turkey-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group, which has a total of 263 members.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan told the press before leaving to take part in the OIC summit in Malaysia, "This war is not fair at all; and there will be no winners. We should not allow this war to turn into a global crisis. If President Abbas, Prime Minister Haniyah and Prime Minister Olmert had maintained a positive approach, we would not have faced this situation." The Turkish Prime Ministry emergency management directorate said in a statement that Turkey would send an aid package worth USD 1 million to Lebanon and another one worth USD 200,000 to the Syrian government to be distributed to the Lebanese refugees in Syria fleeing the Israeli attacks. The package is to consist of rice,

lentils, sugar, beans, jam, and infant food -- totaling 900 tons of food aid.

Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Spokesman Namik Tan said Turkey expected an urgent cease-fire in Lebanon. "Lebanon suffers a great deal every day, which only feeds mutual enmity. The fact that numerous civilians are getting hurt in Israeli attacks makes the issue more problematic," Tan said. He noted that some 2,000 Turkish nationals have been evacuated from Lebanon and that 10,348 foreign nationals have left the embattled country via Turkey.

Editorial Commentary on the Conflict in the Middle East
Noting that the "neo-con ideology is rapidly giving rise to counter-arguments in the Arab world," Taha Akyol, commenting in the mainstream Milliyet, argues that "the solution to the current crisis requires the US to treat the sides fairly and support UNSC resolutions adopted since 1962 which call for a two-state formula." He urges Americans to "think rationally and compare the state of the world and the American image during the Clinton era with that of today."

Writing in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak, Akif Emre commented on hypocrisy in the West: "Israeli aggression in Lebanon is acceptable if one finds the global occupation strategy of America ethical. Nowadays the so-called supporters of global humanitarian values are currently busy producing pretexts for killing children and shedding innocent blood in Lebanon. America and Israel are not alone in this. The EU, which is at least expected to play a balancing role, is Israel's partner in crime. The EU failed even to come up with a declaration for an immediate ceasefire. Can we possibly talk about western values any more? They are nothing but lies about world peace and global capitalism."

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Turgut Tarhanli argues in left-leaning Radikal that motivations behind establishing a peacekeeping force should be examined carefully: "If the UNSC decides to station a peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon under the influence of the US post-Sept 11 ideological approach, it will hardly be seen as legitimate. The US seems to be using the UNSC as a pathway for implementing its strategic priorities. In today's world, by whom and on what grounds a decision for an international force will be taken is of the utmost importance. Will it be a decision of a superpower or a decision made by a collective? Turkey, before deciding on assuming a responsible role, had better focus on the rules of the game."

PM Erdogan in Malaysia for OIC Meeting

All papers: Speaking to the reporters at Esenboga airport in Ankara prior to his departure for Malaysia, Prime Minister Erdogan said "I will attend a meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) on the level of heads of State and government at the invitation of Malaysia. Besides the tragic developments in Lebanon, the recent crisis in Palestine and the Middle East will be high on agenda of the meeting. The crisis has been further deepening day by day and we are extremely concerned about it. I consider this meeting a significant platform to call on the international community to assume a more active attitude for peace." Stressing that the international community including the OIC member countries should work together to provide an immediate cease-fire in the region, Erdogan said, "especially the EU and the UN should play a more active role to this end." Zaman reports that there is a possibility that PM Erdogan may have bilateral meetings with Iranian President Ahmedinejad on Lebanon and Iran's nuclear program.

Gul Op-Ed in Washington Post

Wire services report that in an op-ed in the August 3 Washington Post, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul strongly criticized the United States for failing to stop the violence in Lebanon. Gul said that his own generation had grown up with the image of a US which supported democratic values, but that this image of the US had been greatly damaged with the Lebanon war. "People in the world are asking this question -- Why does the world's only superpower, which is able to put an end to this tragedy, closes its eyes to such pain?" Gul said that, through the inaction of the US, the lives of people in the region along with hopes for greater democracy in the

Middle East were being destroyed. Gul wrote that the only solution to the crisis was for the international community to display decisive action and real leadership.

Fight against PKK

Sabah, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Star: Turkey reiterated yesterday its expectations that the Iraqi Government will soon take effective measures against the PKK. Foreign Ministry spokesman Namik Tan said that Iraqi authorities informed Turkey that they are exerting efforts to stop the PKK activities in their territory and that Turkey expects that those measures will yield concrete results soon. Asked about recent media reports on new plans to act against the PKK, Tan said there was close cooperation with the US and Iraqi authorities, but declined to give any details. Asked about the reports about a visit by Iraqi Kurdish officials to Ankara to discuss new measures against the PKK, Tan said no representatives from any of the groups in the north of Iraq have arrived in Turkey. In relation to this news, US State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack underlined Washington's aim to revive trilateral mechanisms between Turkey, Iraq and the US to fight against the PKK.

International Impression of New TGS Chief Buyukanit

All papers report on the second day of Turkey's Supreme Military Council (YAS) meeting as well as the approach of European media which describes the newly-appointed Chief of Staff General Yasar Buyukanit as a "hawk" expected to pursue more hardline policies than his predecessor Hilmi Ozkok. Papers report Prime Minister Erdogan as saying he wanted Buyukanit to be appointed to the post early in

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an effort to end the speculation claiming sour ties between the ruling AK Party government and military, and to better respond to the PKK violence.

Islamic Banking Growing in Turkey

Aksam reports that Islamic banking in Turkey had accomplished 200 percent growth since 2002 when the AKP government swept to power. The funds collected by Islamic banks in the first seven months of the year increased by 20 percent in comparison to the previous year, jumping to TL 10 billion.

TV Highlights

NTV, 8.00 a.m

Domestic News

- Turkish Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc stressed it would be impossible to dispatch Turkish peacekeepers to Lebanon before a ceasefire.
- Turkish Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights will hold an extraordinary meeting to discuss the ongoing atrocities in Lebanon.
- Hasan Eskimutlu, a Turkish technician who was kidnapped in Iraq on June 14, was released unharmed on Wednesday, the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement.
- Turkish police said in a report the number of criminal ring members arrested had increased by 25 percent in comparison to the previous year.

International News

- Israel is gradually occupying south Lebanon. Hezbollah has been attacking northern Israel in retaliation.
- Secretary Rice said a ceasefire to be reached in Lebanon was "a matter of days, not weeks." The White House, however, said an immediate ceasefire was not on the agenda.
- The Independent of Britain said Israel's attacks on Lebanon have turned Hezbollah leader Nasrallah into a symbol of Muslim pride.
- President Talabani said Iraqi forces would assume security duties

for the whole country by the end of the year.

- The Iraqi press reported US will fund a housing project for 8,000 settlements in the oil rich northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk.

- Turkish and Greek Cypriot leaders Talat and Papadopoulos are to meet on August 8 on the Green Line buffer zone to discuss the formation of the committees to deal with technical issues between the two sides in the island.

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